

Miners continue strike as talks end inconclusively

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The miners of Madhyapara Granite Mining Company Ltd (MGCL) continued their indefinite strike for the second consecutive day yesterday as talks between the miners and the MGCL authorities failed to resolve the stalemate.

A meeting held at 3:30 pm at the MGCL conference room ended inconclusively within half an hour as the authorities could not assure the miners of meeting their demands.

The miners started the indefinite strike on Sunday

demanding regularisation of their jobs and payment of arrears.

Contacted, MGCL managing director Md Farook Hossain said the company did not have the authority to regularise the jobs of 292 miners. "We informed the matter to the higher authorities of Petrobangla," he added.

Sources at the mine said the strike also forced the MGCL authorities to suspend the sale of rocks.

The agitating miners at a meeting held in front of the MGCL gate yesterday morning threatened to intensify their agitation to realise their

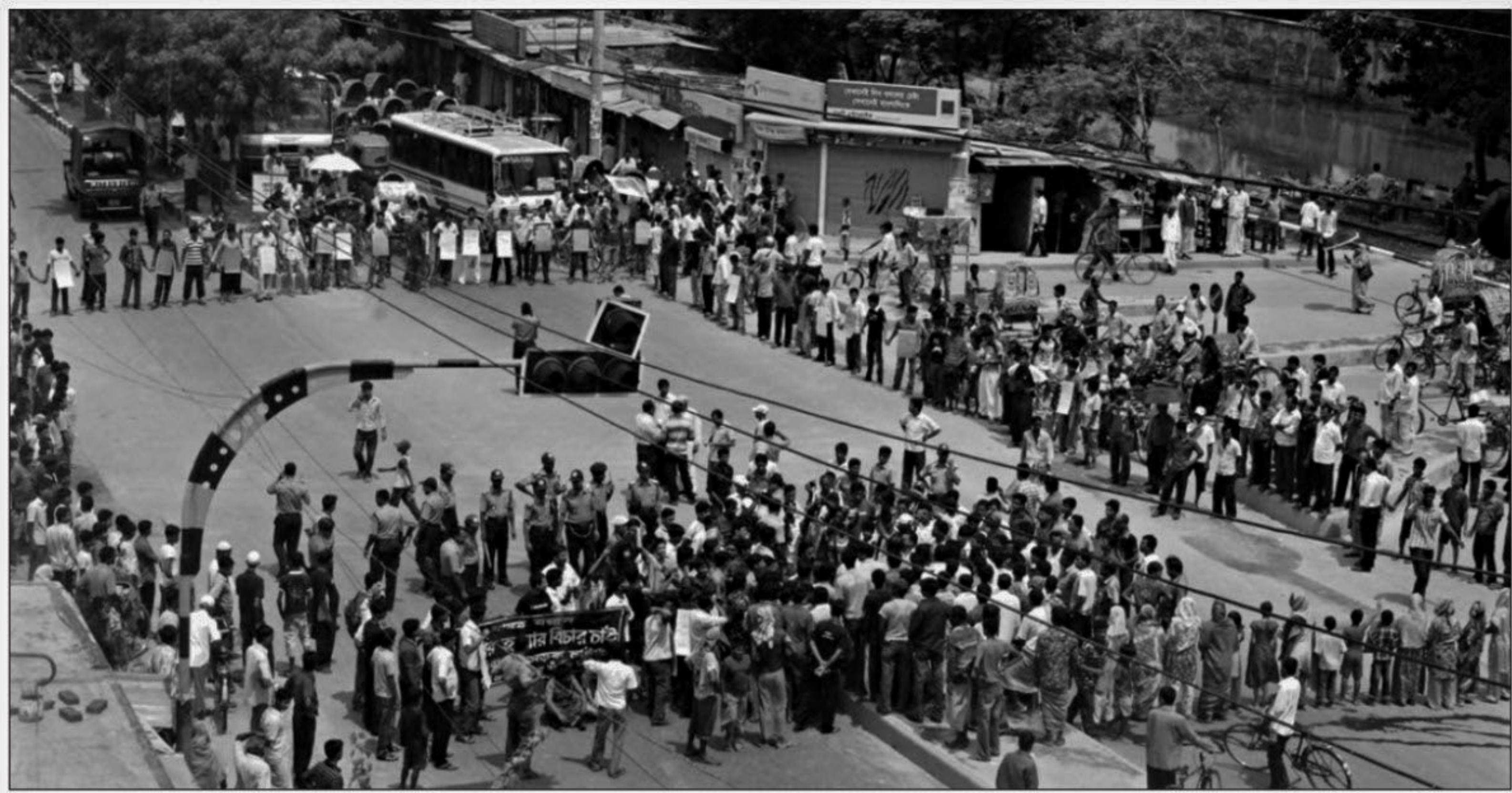
demands.

Earlier, they closed the main gate of the mine and took out a procession in the morning.

Additional Rab and police have been deployed at the gate to avert any untoward situation.

On May 16, the workers through a press conference placed their demands and said they would call a strike if their demands are not met by May 18.

The company will have to incur a loss of around Tk 14 lakh every day due to the suspension of production.



Students of Rajshahi Government College accompanied by locals form a human chain and block Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj highway near Barnali intersection in Rajshahi city yesterday demanding arrest of the driver of the truck that ran over Tusher on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

DEATH OF RAJSHAHI STUDENT

Bring killer truck driver to book, demand protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Agitating students of Rajshahi Government College blocked the Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj Highway near Barnali intersection in the city yesterday protesting the death of a fellow student in Sunday's road accident.

A large number of locals also took to the street at about 10:00am and blocked the highway disrupting road link for about 45 minutes.

Demanding punishment to the 'killer' truck driver they also called for ensuring safe road for commuters.

The protesters withdrew the blockade after Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton assured them of fulfilling their demands.

Tusher, a student of the college, was killed on Sunday morning when a sand-laden truck hit his rickshaw from behind at Barnali intersection in the city. The truck ran over Tusher as he fell from the

rickshaw.

Angered by the accident, locals seized the truck and set it on fire and blocked Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj road seriously hampering traffic movement. The protesters also damaged four other vehicles.

The truck driver and his helper fled the scene.

Relatives said, Tusher came to visit his relatives at Ambagan in the city on the day. But he met the tragic end of his life while returning home.



The entrance of Madhyapara Granite Mining Company in Dinajpur gives deserted look as 292 miners, who on Sunday started an indefinite strike demanding regularisation of their job, closed the main gate yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

BCL men call police after beating up Shibir cadre

RU student alleges blackmail by BCL men branding him as Shibir activist

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested another Shibir activist at Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday in connection with February 9 violence on the campus.

Arrestee Asaduzzaman is a second year student of Arabic department of the university. Sources said at around 11:00am, Chhatra League (BCL) activists led by Nayan and Ferdous of Sayed Amir Ali Hall unit caught Asad in front of the university gymnasium.

They took Asad to room 308 of the hall and severely beat him with sticks, hall sources said. On information, a team from Motihar police station rushed to the hall and arrested the Shibir man.

Abul Khair, officer-in-charge (OC) of Motihar police station told this correspondent that the arrestee is an accused in one of the cases filed in connection with the violence killed of BCL worker Faruk Hossain and injured a number of others on February 9.

"We will take necessary steps after primary interrogation", he said.

According to the police sources, over 200 Shibir leaders and activists have been arrested till date in 14 cases filed after the February 9 violence.

Meanwhile, a RU student has alleged that two BCL men are threatening him to hand over to police branding him as a Shibir activist as he refused to pay them illegal toll.

SM Abu Tareque, a second year student of

Public Administration department told this correspondent that he was a roommate of a Shibir man at Shaheed Suhrawardy Hall. He said the BCL cadres demanded Tk10, 000 from him.

Tareque alleged that BCL activists Ismail, a fourth year student of Accounting department and Mamun, a second year student of Bangla department, both residents of Suhrawardy Hall forcibly took a photocopy of his identity card and his mobile number on May 16.

Later, BCL cadre Mamun called him over cell phone at night and demanded Tk 10, 000 branding him a Shibir man. As he refused to meet the demand, Mamun also threatened to hand me over to police, Tareque said.

On May 18, both the cadres again threatened him to hand over to police. Tareque said on the day he fled away from the examination hall in the middle of examination fearing reprisal by the BCL cadres.

"I received another threat on May 19 evening," Tareque alleged.

Denying the allegations, BCL activist Ismail Hossain said, Tareque is a listed activist of Suhrawardy Hall unit Shibir. He joined shibir men during attack on February 9 that killed BCL worker Faruque Hossain, he added.

Contracted, BCL activist Mamun also denied the allegation of threatening Tareque.

Awal Kabir Joy, RU unit BCL president said he will take stern action if any BCL man is found guilty in this regard.

"We are investigating the matter," he said.

3 children and a man drown

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Three children and a man have drowned in Pabna and Natore.

Our Correspondent in Pabna reports: Two children drowned in the Gumani river at Dhankunia village in Chatmohar upazila on Sunday afternoon.

Police said victims Runa, 5, was daughter of Rabiul Karim of the village while Ashik, 7, was son of Chamta in Boraigram upazila under Natore district. They were cousins.

Family sources said, Runa and Ashik went to the Gumani river for a dip. As Runa was drowning Ashik tried to save her. But both drowned after some time.

In Natore, two people drowned in the Atrai river at Hardama in Gurudashpur upazila yesterday, reports UNB.

Police said, Alamgir, 11, drowned in the river while taking bath at 12 noon.

Seeing the incident, Razab Ali, a resident of the area jumped into the river to rescue the boy but he also drowned in the river due to high tide.

While filing this report, divers of Rajshahi fire brigade were conducting rescue operation



Classes at Lalmonirhat Government College have remained suspended for the last two days as teachers observed work abstention in protest against stalking a female colleague and assaulting another teacher by some unruly students of the college on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

Assault on teacher by 'stalkers' protested

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Teachers of Lalmonirhat Government College abstained from work for the second day yesterday protesting stalking and demanding safety of the teachers.

A group of students of the college stalked Hosne Lotifa, lecturer of political science department, while she was going to the teachers' common room after taking a class on Saturday morning.

The students also assaulted Zakir Hossain, assistant professor of physics department, as he protested the incident. They also kept Zakir confined to a

room. Police later set him free.

Protesting the incident, all the 22 teachers of the college began work abstention from Sunday morning.

General students, who came from different areas to attend their classes, had to go back as teachers refused to take classes.

An emergency meeting was held in the common room yesterday with Principal Mohammad Abdul Bari in the chair.

In the meeting, the college authorities decided to take both departmental and legal actions against the students involved in the incident.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Train kills 2, hurts 7

A CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Two people were killed and seven others injured as a train hit a three-wheeler locally known as bhotbhoti at Salop rail crossing at 8:00 pm Sunday. The injured were admitted to Sirajganj hospital. The dead were identified as Mohammad Ali, 50, of Shamsherpur village under Belkuchi upazila and Hanif, 45, of Charkolagachhi village of the same upazila. They are siblings. A case has been filed with Sirajganj GRP police station.

Statue recovered, 3 held

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Police early yesterday recovered a statue worth about Tk five crore and arrested two in this connection from Benapole port area. Port police sub-inspector Akbar Hossain said, acting on a tip-off, police raided the house of one Shahjahan at gate no 2 of the port and recovered the statue. They also arrested alleged smugglers Farida, 24, Feroz, 27, and Shahjahan, 32. The arrestees hail from Gazipur village in the area. Feroz claimed the seized statue did not belong to him. He said an Indian exporting firm recently sent the statue to him for donating it to a religious organisation. He said he has been implicated in the case in a planned way. A case has been filed with Benapole port police station in this regard.

RPI reopens tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute (RPI) reopens tomorrow after over five months of closure. The RPI was shut on January 7 after Rezwanaul Islam Chowdhury Sunny, the institute unit Chhatra Moitree vice-president was killed in violence and police pressed charges against 13 leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League for the murder. Acting Principal of RPI Engineer M Ayub Ali said the authorities Sunday afternoon decided to reopen the institute on Wednesday following a series of meetings with politicians, students and law enforcers.

Schoolgirl commits 'suicide'

UNB, Pirojpur

A schoolgirl allegedly committed suicide at Boroigunia village in Nazirpur upazila early Sunday. The victim was identified as Saima Aktar Tuli, a student of class nine of Boroigunia Secondary School. Police quoting family sources said Tuli took poison at her maternal grandmother's house in the village on Saturday night. She was rushed to the upazila health complex where she died at about 5:00am. The reason behind the suicide could not be known immediately.

Girl rescued, 2 held

UNB, Jhalakati

Police rescued a kidnapped girl and arrested two people from Khejurtola village in Nalchhiti upazila on Saturday night. The rescued girl was identified as Sonia, 14, a class VIII student of Habibari High School in Mymensingh and daughter of Iman Ali of Meherbari village in Bhaluka upazila of the district. Police said Shafiqul Islam, 20, driver of Sonia's uncle and son of Aynuddin of Bagerhat district, kidnapped her from Mymensingh and brought her to the house of his friend M Faruq, 25, of Khejurtola village in the name of marrying her. Police said, acting on secret information, they raided the house, rescued the girl and arrested Shafiq and Faruq.



Gonojagoron committee forms a human chain in front of Dinaajpur deputy commissioner's office yesterday demanding trial of the war criminals.

PHOTO: STAR

Transport strike

UNB, Sylhet

Road communication between Sylhet and other parts of the country was disrupted yesterday as the district Road Transport Workers' Union called a dawn to dusk strike demanding punishment to the killers of two microbus drivers. Road Transport Workers' Union sources said two microbuses were rented from sylhet a few days ago and later the drivers of the microbuses were found dead in Gazipur of Dhaka district. Movement of bus, minibus and microbus on various routes came to a halt here in the morning following the strike.

HEAVY RAIN, DYKE COLLAPSE Boro on 400 acres in Rangpur, Manikganj goes under water

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Boro paddy on around 400 acres of land has gone under water in Manikganj and Rangpur due to torrential rain and collapse of an embankment.

Our Manikganj correspondent reported that a flood control embankment at Kashadaha under Shibalaya upazila collapsed on Saturday, inundating boro crop on around 200 acres of land.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources said the water level in the Jamuna marked a sharp rise following downpour in the upstream and the dyke collapsed under heavy pressure of water.

Another embankment at Uthuli in the upazila is under threat as the rain-swollen Jamuna continues to rise, the sources said.

Kashadaha Co-operative sources said farmers cultivated boro on around 3,400 acres of land under Kashadaha Irrigation Project this year. Of them, about 200 acres have gone under water.

While visiting the area on Sunday, this correspondent saw the farmers were cutting unripe boro on the submerged land and loading them

onto boats.

The farmers said if water does not recede fast, the boro paddy will get damaged.

They urged the concerned authorities, especially the water Development Board (WDB) to repair the damaged embankment and build two sluice gates on both sides of Kashadaha canal at Kashadaha and Uthuli points.

In Rangpur, about 200 acres of boro cropland in the low-lying areas in Gangachara union under Sadar upazila have gone under water due to heavy rain for the last three days.

The area goes under water even after a moderate rainfall and water remains stagnant for six to seven days or longer because of lack of proper drainage system, according to our correspondent.

Farmers who cultivated boro for the first time in the low-lying areas are cutting unripe paddy to avoid further loss.

Upazila agriculture officer said they asked the farmers to cut the submerged boro paddy immediately. Otherwise, they will face heavy loss, he added.



Farmers take onto a boat boro paddy harvested from a field in Shibalaya upazila of Manikganj district as the area went under water after dyke collapse at Kashadaha on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR